

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the old title of the invention with the following new title as follows:

DECODING APPARATUS AND DECODING METHOD

Please insert the following subheading and paragraph on page 1, following the title:

--CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of application Serial No. 09/986,597 filed on November 9, 2001, which is a continuation of application Serial No. 09/502,056 filed on February 10, 2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,335,841. The contents of application Serial Nos. 09/986,597 and 09/502,056 are hereby incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.--

Please replace the paragraph on page 15, lines 1-12, with the following amended paragraph:

While the above-explained process operation is carried out, the coding device 210 can restrict that the continuous length of "1" in the coded output of this coding device 210 is made smaller than, or equal to 3, and furthermore, both the continuous length of "0" and the continuous length of the catastrophe series are made smaller than, or equal to a constant number. Also, since the parity code is used, when the odd-numbered bit errors happen to occur in these blocks, this fact can be detected except that an error happens to occur in the bit converting unit and this the reverse conversion is erroneously carried out.

Please replace the paragraph on page 28, lines 10-21, with the following amended paragraph:

While the above-explained process operation is carried out, the coding device 350 can restrict that the continuous length of "1" in the coded output of this coding device 350 is made smaller than, or equal to 4, and furthermore, both the continuous length of "0" and the continuous length of the catastrophe series are made smaller than, or equal to a constant number. Also, since the parity code is used, when the odd-numbered bit errors happen to occur in these blocks, this fact can be detected ~~except than an error happens to occur in the bit converting unit and thus the reverse conversion is erroneously carried out.~~